

AFRICAN ACCESS INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER



October 2024

Together in the fight against cancer

Dear AAI Partners and Friends,

In September, I moderated a panel with industry leaders at the Nigeria's Oncology Summit 2.0 hosted by the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) and Nigerian Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment (NICRAT), and headlined by the Minister of Finance, Mr. Adebayo Olawale Edun and Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Dr. Muhammad Ali Pate. With the current leadership in Nigeria, the country is poised to rapidly and dramatically change the face of cancer in the country. Following the Nigeria Summit, our team participated in the 2024 World Cancer Congress where global cancer research and programs aimed at improving cancer patient outcomes worldwide were featured. What an inspiring and hopeful way to kick off the fall!

Oncology workforce strengthening continues to be a priority for our AAI countries and stakeholders. BVGH recently concluded digital courses on the basics of clinical trial management and the pathology of hematologic cancers with experts from the National Institutes of Health/National Cancer Institute, Cleveland Clinic, and the University Hospital Center of Montreal sharing their expertise and knowledge tailored for participants. Through these two AAI training programs, nearly 8,000 healthcare professionals were trained. Five new digital courses have been added to our on-demand education platform, BVGH Learn. In addition to these digital courses, BVGH conducted a prostate cancer management workshop in Rwanda with the American Society of Clinical Oncology, Rwanda Cancer Relief (RCR), and local partners.

BVGH partnered with the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital and First Ladies Against Cancer to develop and deliver materials educating patients and families on the signs of childhood cancer. These materials are already reaching communities and families where they are sure to result in earlier diagnoses and parent awareness.



The childhood cancer awareness materials were prepared in several languages to reach a wide audience across Nigeria

BVGH is pleased to welcome our newest AAI partner hospital, the Federal Teaching Hospital, Katsina!

Sincerely,
Jennifer Dent, President & CEO
BIO Ventures for Global Health

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome AAI Partner Hospital: Federal Teaching Hospital, Katsina



FTH, Katsina is located in northern Nigeria

BVGH is pleased to welcome its newest AAI partner hospital, the Federal Teaching Hospital, Katsina (FTH Katsina), located in Katsina State, Nigeria. With its 2,000 staff members, FTH Katsina provides comprehensive, high-quality healthcare services to patients from across Northern Nigeria and neighboring countries. In 2019, the hospital opened its oncology department, which currently provides cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment services. Next year, FTH Katsina will begin offering cancer patients radiotherapy utilizing state-of-the-art linear accelerators and healthcare equipment provided by Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority.

ESTABLISHING SUSTAINABLE ACCESS TO CANCER MEDICINES AND TECHNOLOGIES

Improving the Quality of Cervical Cancer Screening Services in Rwanda



Nurses and midwives at cervical cancer training program in Bugesera District, Rwanda

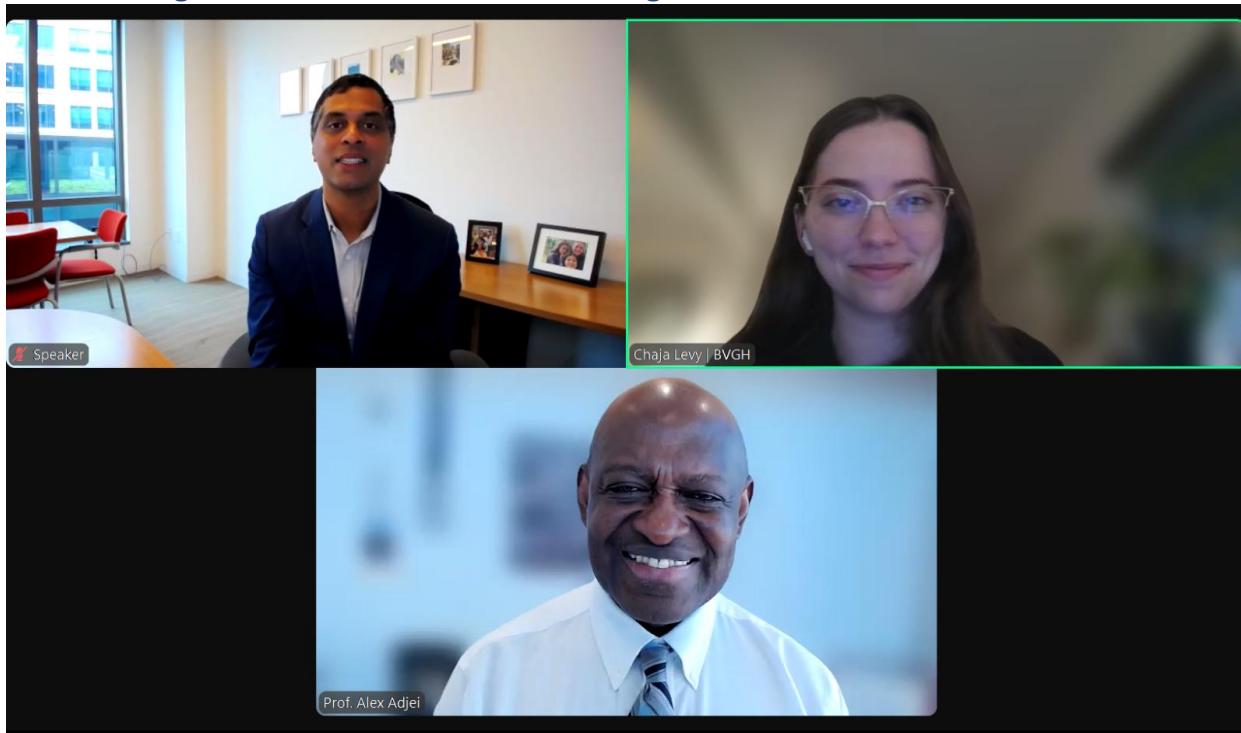
In 2021, BVGH and the Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC) implemented a cervical and breast cancer Educate, Screen, and Treat (EST) program that screened more than 7,000 women for cervical cancer, offered clinical breast exams, and integrated cervical cancer screening into the routine services offered by health facilities in Rwanda's Bugesera District. During the EST program, participating healthcare providers requested continued support for screening quality assurance and patient navigation.

In response, BVGH, RBC, and Queens University teamed up to evaluate the use of a phone-based tool to provide healthcare providers with a second opinion on challenging cervical cancer screening cases. The tool, Smartphone-Enhanced VIA (SEVIA), was originally developed by Professor Karen Yeates at Queens University in partnership with the Ministry of Health of Tanzania to improve the quality and accuracy of visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA) based cervical screening and support downstream patient navigation to minimize loss to follow up.

BVGH, RBC, and Queens University customized SEVIA to Rwanda, including translating the tool into Kinyarwanda. Prior to rollout of the tool in Bugesera District, nurses, midwives, and local expert reviewers were trained on the use of SEVIA and updated on cervical cancer screening protocols. SEVIA was subsequently evaluated during the screening of 120 women across 16 district health facilities.



Clinical Trial Management and Site Readiness Strengthened



2024 BVGH Basics of Clinical Trial Management Lecturers Dr. Satish Gopal (National Cancer Institute) (top left) and Professor Alex Adjei (Cleveland Clinic) (bottom)

BVGH organized and led an 11-lecture digital training program on the basics of clinical trial management. The course, which was designed for professionals in low- and middle-income countries who are interested in conducting clinical trials, attracted 5,752 participants from 111 countries globally. Experts from the United States Food and Drug Administration, Cleveland Clinic, Johns Hopkins Medicine, Obafemi Awolowo University, Amgen, American Society of Clinical Oncology, and Duke University School of Medicine covered topics prioritized by BVGH's partners, including clinical trial phases, protocol development, implementation, management, and close-out.

Dr. Satish Global, Director of the Center for Global Health at the National Cancer Institute, delivered closing remarks for the course.

"The course has not only enhanced my understanding of clinical trial management but has also inspired me to apply these principles in my work to improve health outcomes in Ethiopia. I look forward to future courses and collaborations that can further strengthen our capacity to conduct impactful research and improve health delivery in our communities."

– Dr. Kemal Lemnuro Awol, Physician, Werabe University, Ethiopia

BVGH, ASCO, and RCR Team Up to Enhance Prostate Cancer Management in Rwanda



Prostate cancer management workshop attendees with visiting ASCO lecturers

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men in Rwanda and is a leading cause of cancer mortality in the country. Despite its annual cancer incidence of [7,122](#), there are fewer than 70 oncology healthcare professionals practicing in Rwanda. To optimize interdisciplinary communication and maximize the efficiency of Rwanda's oncology workforce, BVGH partnered with Rwanda Cancer Relief, the Rwanda Biomedical Center, and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) to conduct a three-day Multidisciplinary Management of Prostate Cancer workshop in Kigali, Rwanda.

During the workshop, ASCO trainers (Dr. Simon Hughes, Dr. Alison Tree, and Dr. Zipporah Ali) and local faculty reviewed case studies, delivered lectures, and held Q&A sessions on topics integral to prostate cancer care ranging from diagnosis and staging, treatment and management, palliative care, and cancer research. Forty-four participants from Rwanda's five tertiary hospitals were in attendance, including oncologists, urologists, radiologists, pathologists, and medical students. The workshop concluded with attendees sharing the changes that they intend to make to their practice – notably the promotion of palliative care and communicating with other specialists during patient management.

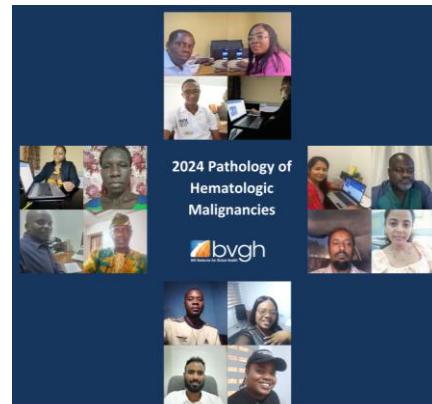
"I learned that palliative care does not start with metastatic cancer, but is a practice to consider from the first day of a patient's diagnosis and throughout his treatment. This includes psycho-social support, counseling both for the patient and the family member, and most importantly the patient's pain management."

– Workshop attendee

Trainees Gain Valuable Knowledge of Hematologic Malignancies



Participants of the 2024 AAI Pathology of Hematologic Malignancies Digital Training (French)



Participants in the 2024 AAI Pathology of Hematologic Malignancies Digital Training (English)

Despite hematologic malignancies such as leukemias and myeloproliferative disorders being highly prevalent in Africa, pathology laboratories in public cancer hospitals have limited capacity to diagnose patients. In response to requests from AAI partner hospitals, BVGH developed a [7-session French-language](#) and a [9-session English-language](#) set of digital courses titled “2024 AAI Pathology of Hematologic Malignancies”. The training series covered pathology concepts such as diagnostic techniques and fine needle aspiration for various hematologic malignancies, including leukemia, lymphoproliferative disorders, and myeloproliferative disorders. BVGH’s French-language program trained a total of 892 healthcare professionals from 36 different countries and the English-language course attracted over 1,300 participants from 70 countries. Lectures were given by experts from the University of North Carolina, Queen Mary University of London, PhenoPath Laboratories, University Hospital of Tübingen, Loyola University Medical Center, Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont, CHU de Montréal, Hôpital Pitié-Salpêtrière, and the National Cancer Institute.

“Many thanks to the organizers, the teachers, and the whole team for the time, the knowledge, and the know-how that you have transmitted to us. Rest assured it will save the lives of some and improve that of others.”

– Dr. Israël Amen BABELA, General Practitioner at Baongo Reference Hospital in Brazzaville, Congo

“This is one of the most comprehensive workshops on hematological malignancies I have attended. It was so insightful and rich in information. The materials from this workshop will be a foundational resource to which I will always reference going forward with regards to hematological malignancies.”

– English course participant

Nigeria Expanding Radiotherapy Services Nationwide



Medical physicists from NLCC, Jos University Teaching Hospital, and the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital pose during the on-site training

In early 2024, the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) and the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Nigeria entered into an agreement to equip six Nigerian cancer centers with state-of-the-art radiotherapy systems. To ensure that cancer center personnel are prepared to utilize the machines, NSIA and its Advanced Medical Services Limited (MedServe) partnered with the National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment (NICRAT) and BVGH to coordinate training of center staff on current techniques in radiation oncology. Over the course of three years, 27 cohorts of radiation oncologists, medical physicists, radiotherapy technicians, and oncology nurses will receive hands-on training from the highly skilled staff at the NSIA-LUTH Cancer Center (NLCC) in Lagos.

BVGH partnered with NSIA, Medserve, and the NLCC trainers to develop and implement complementary digital training and ongoing mentorship opportunities to further trainees' theoretical understanding of radiation oncology practices. The trainees will participate in the digital lectures and mentorships while they are at NLCC and will continue attendance once they return to their home institutions to ensure retention of their new knowledge and skills.



Educational Materials Enhance Childhood Cancer Awareness in Abuja, Nigeria



University of Abuja Teaching Hospital stakeholders including Chief Medical Director Professor Bissallah Ahmed Ekele and Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee Dr. Bob Ukonu pose with the Founder and CEO of Medicaid Cancer Foundation and new pediatric cancer awareness materials

In the USA, 90% of pediatric cancer patients survive their disease; in Africa, 90% of pediatric cancer patients die. Lack of pediatric cancer awareness, which results in late-stage diagnoses and treatment abandonment, contribute to Africa's dismal mortality rates. To rewrite Nigeria's pediatric cancer narrative, BVGH partnered with the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital (UATH) and the First Ladies Against Cancer (FLAC) to educate communities and parents about pediatric cancers and their symptoms. BVGH and FLAC designed educational brochures, posters, and flyers printed in five local languages (English, Pidgin English, Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo). The materials were posted in UATH waiting rooms and distributed to patients and hospital visitors.

In recognition of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, the Medicaid Cancer Foundation visited a [village near Abuja](#) to distribute the educational handouts and discuss childhood cancer symptoms and the importance of detecting cancers early with parents and their children.

Oncology Summit 2.0: Enhancing the Oncology Workforce in Nigeria



Private industry panelists from left to right: Dr. Chitkala Kalidas (Bayer), Jennifer Dent (BVGH), Dr. Ladi Hameed (Roche), Jose-Manuel Valentim (Siemens Healthineers), and Femi Ogunwede (Johnson & Johnson)



Honorable Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Adebayo Olawale Edun giving remarks at the summit



Honorable Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Pate presents to stakeholders

The Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) and Nigeria's National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment (NICRAT) hosted the Oncology Summit 2.0 in Abuja, Nigeria. With the theme of "Enhancing the Oncology Workforce in Nigeria", the summit brought together stakeholders from the private, public, and healthcare sectors to discuss the future of oncology care in Nigeria. The Summit demonstrated Nigeria's united leadership targeting cancer, with inspiring and personal messages conveyed by both the Minister of Finance, Mr. Adebayo Olawale Edun and the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Dr. Muhammad Ali Pate.

BVGH President & CEO Jennifer Dent led a panel of executives from Bayer, Johnson & Johnson, Roche, and Siemens Healthineers to discuss their companies' programs to strengthen healthcare providers' clinical oncology skills across immunohistochemistry, the use of multidisciplinary tumor boards in clinical care, linear accelerator commissioning, clinical trials, and more. The companies' commitment to seeing cancer patient outcomes in Nigeria improve was evident.

HypoAfrica Multi-Center Radiotherapy Clinical Trial Results Presented at World Cancer Congress



Prof. Twalib Ngoma (Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Tanzania) presents the HypoAfrica clinical trial preliminary result.

The HypoAfrica clinical trial consortium – a study spearheaded by BVGH with AC³T support from Takeda – team presented the preliminary results of their study evaluating the feasibility of applying moderate hypofractionated radiotherapy to treat African men with localized prostate cancer. The study, which is led by investigators in Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda, was launched in 2021 by BVGH and collaborators from Erasmus Medical Center and Johns Hopkins University. The consortium is supported by radiation oncology experts from cancer centers across the USA, Europe, and Australia.



Accelerating Nigeria's Path to Comprehensive Cancer Control: International Cancer Week 2024

This October, the International Cancer Week 2024 will turn the spotlight on cancer prevention, research, and treatment in Nigeria. From October 28 to November 1, the conference in Abuja – hosted by Nigeria's National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment (NICRAT) – will gather healthcare professionals, researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders, and cancer leaders to discuss challenges, advancements, and strategies to improve cancer outcomes, under the theme of "Accelerating Nigeria's Path to Comprehensive Cancer Control: Innovation, Access, and Partnership."

More information is available at www.nicrat.gov.ng, including [a link to register](#). Options for both virtual and in-person attendance are available. Global cancer stakeholders are encouraged to contact [Prof. Musa Ali-Gombe, Director Clinical Services NICRAT](#), for sponsorship and session opportunities.

ISOPP's No Fee Membership

The International Society of Oncology Pharmacy Practitioners (ISOPP) aims to advance oncology pharmacy care for patients throughout the world through engaged membership, empowering the global oncology pharmacy community, facilitating professional development, and advocating for the advancement of oncology pharmacy. Click [here](#) to learn more about ISOPP's no-fee membership.

Upcoming AAI Digital Trainings

Stay tuned for more information about BVGH's upcoming digital training programs. If you would like to receive invitations to our courses, please submit this brief form: <https://forms.gle/8stQmomGXAifY2ah8>

- [Imaging Common Cancers \(English & French\)](#)
- [Introduction to Common Cancers in the Community \(English & French\)](#)
- [Introduction to Treatment of Colorectal and Liver Cancers \(English\)](#)
- [Introduction to Treatment of Colorectal and Hematologic Cancers \(French\)](#)

New Courses on BVGH Learn

New courses are now available on BVGH's on-demand online education platform, [BVGH Learn](#):

- [2023 AAI Laboratory Operations and Management \(English\)](#)
- [2023 AAI Cancer Biopsy and Surgical Treatment \(English\)](#)
- [2023 AAI Nurse's Role in Research \(English\)](#)
- [2024 AAI Treatment of Hematologic Cancers \(English\)](#)
- [2024 AAI Pathology of Hematologic Malignancies \(English\)](#)

If you would like to be notified as soon as new courses are added to BVGH Learn, you can follow us on our socials at [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#). To view our complete list of online educational content, please visit <https://bvghlearn.org>.

Join the Fight

To learn more about AAI and to get involved, please contact [Katy Graef](#).

Thank you to our AAI Partners



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